

**Howard College Quality Enhancement Plan**  
*Critical Thinking...for Learning, for Earning, for Life!*

**Executive Summary**

The goal of the Howard College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to improve student learning by fostering critical thinking. In order for this goal to be attained, English, math, and science faculty will first be provided opportunities for intensive training in critical thinking teaching strategies, and they will use the information gleaned from the training as they develop critical thinking activities and projects for implementation in their classes.

The development and implementation of this QEP fits well within Howard College's culture of continuous improvement and its vision to be a beacon of education and life-long learning. The college defines critical thinking as thinking with purpose, skill, and confidence. Based on this definition, students demonstrate critical thinking when they

- ask vital questions
- collect and measure relevant information
- arrive at well-reasoned conclusions
- consider alternative systems of thought
- communicate effectively with others

The definition of critical thinking and the student learning outcomes serve as the foundation of this QEP.

Critical Thinking Teams comprised of English, math, and science faculty will participate in workshops and trainings and will then develop critical thinking activities and projects to be implemented in their classes. A locally developed critical thinking rubric and the California Critical Thinking Test will be used to assess critical thinking skills. The Community College Survey of Student Engagement will be used as a supplementary form of assessment.

This plan utilizes the college's existing infrastructure and strategic planning cycle to implement and assess the QEP. Critical thinking will become an integral part of all strategic planning activities. A QEP Progress Report will be submitted annually to the Board of Trustees. This report will detail critical thinking strategies, data, outcomes, and improvement plans of departments across the college district. A detailed budget has been developed, and the college leadership is committed to providing the necessary resources to implement and sustain the plan.

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